

Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented): An image processing system including:

- a scanner for reading a document image; and

- a terminal apparatus connected to said scanner in a manner permitting communications so as to transmit an operation instruction to said scanner, wherein

- said scanner comprises:

- first fingerprint information reading means for reading fingerprint information of an operator; and

- first fingerprint information storing means for storing temporarily the fingerprint information read by said first fingerprint information reading means,
- said terminal apparatus comprises:

- second fingerprint information reading means for reading second fingerprint information of the operator or a different operator; and

- second fingerprint information storing means for storing temporarily the second fingerprint information read by said second fingerprint information reading means; and
- fingerprint information collating means for collating the fingerprint information stored in said first fingerprint information storing means with the second fingerprint information read by said second fingerprint information reading means by means of communications between said scanner and said terminal apparatus; and

- operation permitting means for permitting the operation of said scanner in response to the operation instruction inputted through said terminal apparatus on the basis of the result of collation in said fingerprint information collating means are provided either in said scanner or in said terminal apparatus, or alternatively any one of said fingerprint information collating means and said operation permitting means is provided in said scanner while the other one is provided in said terminal apparatus,

wherein the fingerprint information stored in the scanner and the second fingerprint information stored in the terminal apparatus are deleted upon completion of a reading operation of the document image or when a predetermined time has elapsed before the reading operation is completed.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The image processing system as set forth in claim 1, wherein when collation by said fingerprint information collating means results in a match, said operation permitting means permits the operation of said scanner in response to the operation instruction inputted through said terminal apparatus.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The image processing system as set forth in claim 2, wherein said scanner comprises:

document image reading means for reading document image before receiving said operation instruction;

associated information generating means for generating associated information in which the document image information read by said document image reading means and the fingerprint information read by said first fingerprint information reading means are associated with each other; and

associated information storing means connected to said scanner in a manner permitting communications so as to store the associated information generated by said associated information generating means is further included.

Claim 4 (original): The image processing system as set forth in claim 3, wherein a server provided with said associated information storing means is connected to said scanner and said terminal apparatus in a manner permitting communications.

Claim 5 (original): The image processing system as set forth in claim 4, wherein either said scanner or said terminal apparatus comprises:

associated image information collating means for collating the document image information read by said document image reading means with the image information contained in said associated information of a past time;

associated fingerprint information collating means for collating the fingerprint information stored in said first fingerprint information storing means with the fingerprint information contained in said associated information of the past time; and

operation inhibiting means for inhibiting the operation of said scanner when the collation by said associated image information collating means matches and the collation by said associated fingerprint information collating means does not match.

Claim 6 (original): The image processing system as set forth in claim 5, wherein said scanner and/or said terminal apparatus comprises associated information deleting means for deleting said associated information when reading operation of image by said scanner is completed or when a predetermined time has elapsed before reading operation of image by said scanner completed.

Claim 7 (original): The image processing system as set forth in claim 6, wherein when a document is removed before the reading operation of the image by said scanner is completed, said associated information deleting means does not delete the associated information generated for the removed document.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The image processing system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said scanner comprises:

document image reading means for reading document image before receiving said operation instruction;

associated information generating means for generating associated information in which the document image information read by said document image reading means and the fingerprint information read by said first fingerprint information reading means are associated with each other; and

associated information storing means connected to said scanner in a manner permitting communications so as to store the associated information generated by said associated information generating means is further included.

Claim 9 (original): The image processing system as set forth in claim 8, wherein a server provided with said associated information storing means is connected to said scanner and said terminal apparatus in a manner permitting communications.

Claim 10 (original): The image processing system as set forth in claim 9, wherein either said scanner or said terminal apparatus comprises:

associated image information collating means for collating the document image information read by said document image reading means with the image information contained in said associated information of a past time;

associated fingerprint information collating means for collating the fingerprint information stored in said first fingerprint information storing means with the fingerprint information contained in said associated information of the past time; and

operation inhibiting means for inhibiting the operation of said scanner when the collation by said associated image information collating means matches and the collation by said associated fingerprint information collating means does not match.

Claim 11 (original): The image processing system as set forth in claim 10, wherein said scanner and/or said terminal apparatus comprises associated information deleting means for deleting said associated information when reading operation of image by said scanner is completed or when a predetermined time has elapsed before reading operation of image by said scanner completed.

Claim 12 (original): The image processing system as set forth in claim 11, wherein when a document is removed before the reading operation of the image by said scanner is completed, said associated information deleting means does not delete the associated information generated for the removed document.

Claim 13 (original): The image processing system as set forth in claim 1, wherein either said scanner or said terminal apparatus comprises:

associated image information collating means for collating the document image information read by said document image reading means with the image information contained in said associated information of a past time;

associated fingerprint information collating means for collating the fingerprint information stored in said first fingerprint information storing means with the fingerprint information contained in said associated information of the past time; and

operation inhibiting means for inhibiting the operation of said scanner when the collation by said associated image information collating means matches and the collation by said associated fingerprint information collating means does not match.

Claim 14 (original): The image processing system as set forth in claim 13, wherein said scanner and/or said terminal apparatus comprises associated information deleting means for deleting said associated information when reading operation of image by said scanner is completed or when a predetermined time has elapsed before reading operation of image by said scanner completed.

Claim 15 (original): The image processing system as set forth in claim 14, wherein when a document is removed before the reading operation of the image by said scanner is completed, said associated information deleting means does not delete the associated information generated for the removed document.

Claims 16-21 (canceled)